

CLAIMS:

1. An image reproducing apparatus comprising:

5       an image forming part that carries out an image forming and reproducing process;

          a data storage that stores a plurality of possible problems occurring in connection with the image forming and reproducing process, each problem  
10       being stored in association with addressee information;

          an acquiring unit that acquires problem information when one of the problems occurs in connection with the image forming and reproducing  
15       process;

          an addressee determination unit that selects an addressee corresponding to said one of the problems with reference to the data storage; and

          a communication unit that reports occurrence of  
20       said one of the problems to the selected addressee.

25    2. The image reproducing apparatus according to claim

1, wherein the forming and reproducing process includes at least one of a printing process for recording and outputting an image and a reading process for optically reading an original, and the  
5 image forming part includes at least one of a printing section that records and outputs the image, and a reading section that optically reads the original.

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3. The image reproducing apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising a printing process management  
15 unit that monitors and detects printing problems occurring in connection with the printing process, and a reading process management unit that monitors and detects reading problems occurring in connection with the reading process, wherein the acquiring unit  
20 acquires said one of the problems from one of the printing process management unit and the reading process management unit.

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4. The image reproducing apparatus according to claim  
1, further comprising a use information retaining  
unit that retains use information about the image  
5 reproducing apparatus, wherein the communication unit  
reports the occurrence of said one of the problems,  
together with the use information, to the selected  
addressee.

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5. The image reproducing apparatus according to claim  
4, wherein the use information contains location  
15 information representing the location of the image  
reproducing apparatus.

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6. The image reproducing apparatus according to claim  
4, wherein the use information contains ID  
information for identifying the image reproducing  
apparatus.

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7. The image reproducing apparatus according to claim  
5 1, wherein the data storage stores one or more  
addressees as the addressee information, in  
association with said one of the problems.

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8. The image reproducing apparatus according to claim  
7, wherein the data storage stores at least one of a  
user of the image reproducing apparatus, a system  
15 administrator who conducts system administration for  
the image reproducing apparatus, and a maintenance  
person of the service center, in association with  
said one of the problems.

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9. The image reproducing apparatus according to claim  
1, further comprising e-mail creating means that  
25 creates an e-mail to report the addressee of the

occurrence of said one of the problems, wherein the data storage stores an e-mail address as the addressee information, in association with said one of the problems.

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10. The image reproducing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the data storage stores a problem ID code in association with said one of the problems, and the e-mail creating means inserts the problem ID code in the subject of the e-mail.

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11. The image reproducing apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising Web page creating means that creates a Web page containing detailed information about the problems detected in the image reporting and reproducing process.

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12. The image reproducing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the e-mail creating means inserts the URL of the Web page in the subject of the e-mail.

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13. A method for monitoring and reporting problem occurring in connection with an image forming and reproducing process, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of possible problems occurring in connection with the image forming and reproducing process in advance, each of the problems being stored in association with addressee information;

detecting one of the problems having occurred in connection with the image forming and reproducing process;

determining an addressee to which the occurrence of the detected problem is to be reported, from the addressee information stored in association with the detected problem; and

reporting the detected problem to the determined

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addressee.

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14. A problem monitoring apparatus connected to an image reproducing apparatus, comprising:

10 a data storage that stores a plurality of possible problems occurring in connection with an image forming and reproducing process carried out in the image reproducing apparatus, each of the problems being stored in association with addressee information;

15 an acquiring unit that receives and acquires problem information from the image reproducing apparatus when one of the problems occurs in the image reproducing apparatus;

20 an addressee determination unit that selects an addressee corresponding to said one of the problems with reference to the data storage; and

a communication unit that reports occurrence of said one of the problems to the selected addressee.